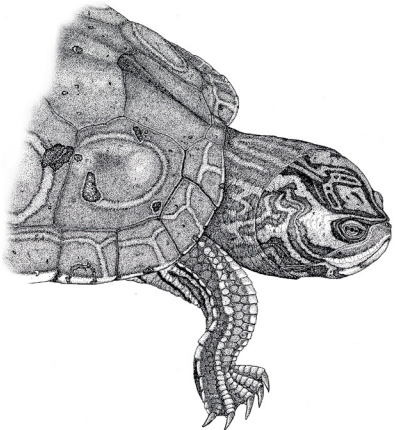


Florida Riverine Turtles Conservation Program

The FTCT's Florida Riverine Turtles Conservation Program addresses the diverse conservation needs of this threatened group of chelonians. Areas of focus include the development of educational programs and materials, coordination of community-supported habitat cleanups, identification of existing threats, and development of recommendations resulting in positive change. Selected achievements to date include:

- ✓ organized Florida turtle educational exhibits at nature festivals, environmental events and conferences
- ✓ organized a public lecture on map turtles at Chipola College (Marianna)
- ✓ led educational canoe/snorkel trips on Florida rivers
- ✓ donated books on Florida turtles to all public school libraries in the six counties bordering the Apalachicola River
- ✓ organized a habitat cleanup in the Florida panhandle
- ✓ initiated a review by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission of a regulation pertaining to the take of Suwannee cooters, which resulted in a reinterpretation that the subspecies is protected
- ✓ supported commercial harvest closure of freshwater turtles



About the Florida Turtle Conservation Trust

The Florida Turtle Conservation Trust was formed in 1999 by a group of biologists and conservationists concerned with the conservation outlook for Florida turtles. Our purpose is to promote the conservation of all Florida turtle species and the preservation of intact, free-ranging populations and their associated ecosystems throughout the state. The FTCT is committed to and supports education, conservation, research, and management efforts with the above goals in mind.

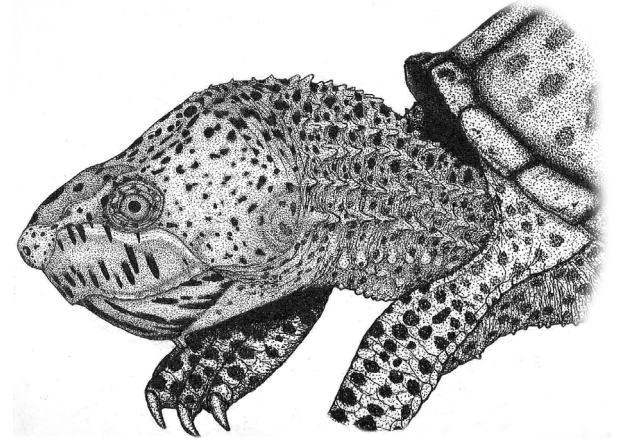
If you are not already a member of the Florida Turtle Conservation Trust, please consider joining us as we work to conserve Florida's rich turtle diversity. Members include biologists, land managers, agency representatives, environmental consultants, educators, conservationists, and concerned citizens. In addition to supporting our conservation work, members receive discounts on meeting registration fees and opportunities to attend organized field trips. Please visit our website for more information.



www.ftct.org

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Conserving Florida's Riverine Turtles

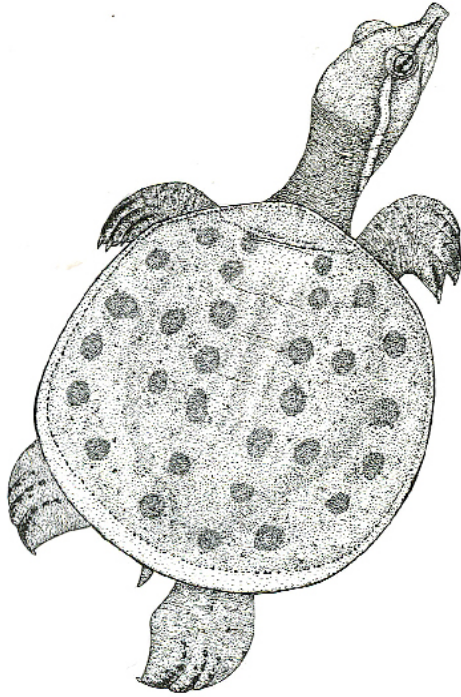


Florida Turtle Conservation Trust

*Working to conserve Florida's
rich turtle diversity*

www.ftct.org

Florida's Riverine Turtles



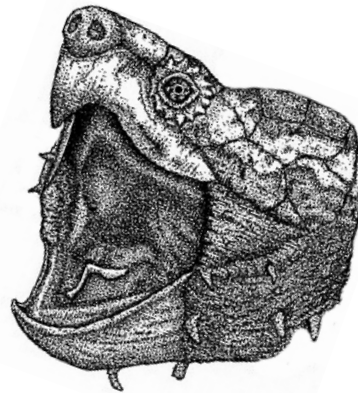
Riverine turtles are a taxonomically diverse group and play significant ecological roles. Florida's varied river systems are important habitats for turtles. Sixty percent of Florida's turtle species are associated with rivers, with seven being principally riverine.

Many of the riverine turtle species that occur in Florida are in decline and in need of conservation attention. Habitat loss and degradation are the greatest threat, with water quality issues being a major concern. Turtles are barometers of the environment; their health is a good indicator as to the health of the ecosystems in which they live. Threats to riverine habitats affect not only turtles, but also our water supply.

Recent research has identified encounters with boats as a threat of concern to riverine turtles. An FTCT-supported project has determined that many turtle species in Florida are impacted by this threat.

Regulations implemented in 2009 by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have begun to address the impacts of collecting freshwater turtle species for food and the pet trade. Development of effective education and enforcement programs by this state wildlife agency would be additional positive actions toward conserving riverine turtles.

Riverine turtles, as fascinating as they are, probably receive the least attention when it comes to research and conservation programs. Certainly, the threats to riverine turtles and their associated ecosystems present broad conservation challenges. However, despite the apparent urgency of the Florida situation, the opportunities for conservation remain great.



"Of all reptiles and amphibians, no group is more dependent upon Florida's rivers than freshwater turtles." - Dale R. Jackson

"There is grave concern for the future of many of the world's river turtles... The reasons for the precipitous decline in so many riverine species are linked to human activity in almost every case." - Edward O. Moll and Don Moll

Florida Turtle Species Associated with Rivers

Snapping turtles (Chelydridae)

Common snapping turtle, *Chelydra serpentina* (O)

Alligator snapping turtle, *Macrochelys temminckii* (P, SSC)

Box and pond turtles (Emydidae)

Barbour's map turtle, *Graptemys barbouri* (P, SSC)

Escambia map turtle, *Graptemys ernsti* (P)

River cooter, *Pseudemys concinna* (P, SSC¹)

Florida cooter, *Pseudemys floridana* (O)

Florida redbelly turtle, *Pseudemys nelsoni* (O)

Slider, *Trachemys scripta* (O)

Mud and musk turtles (Kinosternidae)

Striped mud turtle, *Kinosternon baurii* (O, E²)

Eastern mud turtle, *Kinosternon subrubrum* (O)

Loggerhead musk turtle, *Sternotherus minor* (P)

Common musk turtle, *Sternotherus odoratus* (O)

Softshell turtles (Trionychidae)

Florida softshell, *Apalone ferox* (O)

Smooth softshell, *Apalone mutica* (P)

Spiny softshell, *Apalone spinifera* (P)

Key: O = occasionally riverine; P = principally riverine; SSC = Species of Special Concern; E = Endangered; ¹ = *P. c. suwanniensis* subspecies only; ² = Lower Keys population only (legal status as listed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)